



RUSSELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Dennis Reardon,
Principal

April 9, 2021

Dear Parents/ Guardians,

The purpose of this communication is to provide families with information related to the 2021 Spring PSSA assessment. There are two sections found in this update. The first includes dates and information about the PSSA assessment and the second contains information related to opt-out procedures and/or parental refusals.

PSSA Dates and Information:

As mentioned in Dr. Kane's letter sent on March 17, the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) are requiring all schools to administer the PSSAs for the 2020-2021 school year. For your planning purposes, Russell Elementary School will be administering the online version of the PSSAs on the following dates:

Subject	Dates	Testing Time	Grades
ELA	Monday, May 24 th - Wednesday, May 26 th (3 testing days)	9:30AM-11:30AM	3, 4, and 5
Math	Wednesday, June 2 nd & Thursday, June 3 rd (2 testing days)	9:30AM-11:30AM	3, 4, and 5
Science	Monday, June 7 & Tuesday, June 8 th (2 testing days)	9:30AM-11:30AM	4

The Marple Newtown School District must follow the state and federal mandate to administer the PSSAs. Although some flexibility was provided with regard to the testing window, USDE and PDE both affirmed their commitment to the administration of the PSSAs for the current school year.

The Marple Newtown School District will continue to adhere to all safety protocols during PSSA administration. It is important to note that students must be **in person** when the PSSA is administered. We would like families to know that there is not a virtual administration option available for students. For those families who have elected to keep their children in the full virtual environment, classroom space will be provided during the in-person testing sessions. I will be communicating more detailed information regarding your child's testing location as we get closer to the testing dates.

Information Related to Opt-Outs / Refusals

All Marple Newtown School District students are expected to participate in state-mandated testing. We realize that this year is unique for Russell Elementary School families, as they navigate the ever-changing pandemic and the impact it has had on education. Due to safety and social-emotional concerns, some of our families have inquired about opt-out/refusal options for PSSAs.

The PDE recognizes a religious objection opt-out option for PSSAs. In past years, this process would require parents/guardians to review the test materials and then submit in writing that they have a religious objection to the content. **In addition to the religious objection, the state allows a district to recognize that parents have the right to refuse participation in the PSSAs.** This is known as a parental refusal and does not require the review of the testing materials. Instead, it requires written notification to the building principal that a parent/guardian does not want their child to take the PSSA. Due to COVID-19, all opt-out requests will be handled by written notification to the building principal. No schools in the Marple Newtown School District are permitting visitors at this time.

All students who opt-out of the PSSA will begin school after the assessments are over. If you would like to exercise your right as a parent to opt-out of the assessments, you may do so. For planning purposes, please send me an email by April 23rd to let me know of your intentions to opt your child out of this year's PSSA assessment, at dreardon@mnsd.org.

Students who opt-out of the PSSA will be provided an alternative assignment to do at home during testing. Once the assessments have been administered, students can come to school for the remainder of the school day at 12:00 PM, however, transportation will not be provided.

If you have any questions about the administration of the assessments, please feel free to contact us. Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

Dennis Reardon
Principal

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